President’s address

Since joining the board of the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC), I’ve had more of an opportunity than ever before to travel round the country and see what is going on across the network.

I’ve been impressed by the strategic sense of purpose of our whole operation. We really are the voice of business, taken very seriously by government ministers, their shadows and national media.

There are just so many Suffolk Chamber initiatives that are driving forward the skills and confidence of local businesses. It is difficult to know where to start. I am delighted that our programme of support to exporters continues to develop with the recent highly-regarded workshop on exporting to Russia (page 5).

It is also good to see TechEast, a wholly-owned subsidiary of your chamber, has set up its London office (page 4).

And our Young Chamber initiative goes from strength-to-strength in helping more schools and colleges than ever before bridge the gap between the worlds of education and work. The scheme received a real boost late last year as EDF Energy became its second patron (page 12).

This edition of Chamber Voice also contains coverage of the excellent Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney Business Awards. Thanks to the kindness of our friends at Archant, we have also been able to reproduce an interview from the East Anglian Daily Times with three of our partners and representatives, including our extremely productively with public sector

Our immediate past president, Dr Peter Funnell has been appointed as the independent chair of the New Anglia Post-16 Area Review Steering Group (page 4). This important review will assess local economic and education needs to make sure that our college education system meets the needs of learners and employers.

In terms of drive and energy, nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than among the fantastic members of our various boards. Everyone involved is a volunteer, as well as being incredibly busy running their own businesses and pursing many other interests.

You can catch up with news about the boards overseeing our town representation on pages 16 and 17.

And devolution might not be entirely over either (page 5). Finally, don’t forget that you’ve still got a day or so to contribute to the Stage 2 consultation into EDF Energy’s proposed Sizewell C power station. More information on page 12.

So thanks to 2016 and here’s to a Suffolk-style successful 2017!

John Dugmore
Chief Executive
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

CEO welcome

Well the last 12 months certainly contained moments of drama – internationally, nationally and locally. Donald Trump was elected as US President. Brexit was backed. Devolution for Suffolk and Norfolk wasn’t.

But it was also the year when the Suffolk success story continued to advance.

I’m not suggesting, obviously, that we are insulated from the events listed above. But I do believe that our business community, because of its diversity, the collaborative way in which it engages with our public sector partners to best effect, and its sheer drive and energy, is better placed than most areas.

The diversity of our membership is shown by the broad range of businesses covered in the Chamber Member News section of this edition of Chamber Voice. Read about golf course equipment manufacturers at the Rio Olympics (page 19), award-winning accountancy software developers (page 20) and more.

Of course, there is still more to be done to realise the massive business potential of our local community and that is why I am delighted to tell you that Suffolk Business Women, part of Suffolk Chamber, has launched its campaign for more agile working practices across the county as well as more equal representation between the genders (page 6). I’m also pleased that your chamber was able to sponsor an award at the inaugural Black and Minority Ethnic Business Awards (page 6), celebrating the incredible achievements of this part of our business community.

Suffolk Chamber continues to work extremely productively with public sector partners and representatives, including our seven MPs. It was a pleasure to catch up with Peter Aldous MP for my feature interview (pages 10 and 11) in this magazine.

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Contents

3 Lowestoft & Waveney Business Awards
4 New post-16 review chair
5 Devolution update
6 Time for business women to get agile
7 Closing the gender gap
8 Chamber network lunch
9 Inside Lowestoft & Waveney Business awards
10-11 The Chamber Voice interview: John Dugmore speaks with Peter Aldous
12 EDF Energy signs up to Young Chamber Plus scheme
13 Rail franchise brings £1.45 billion investment
14-15 New chamber members
16 New Lowestoft & Waveney chair revealed
17 New chair for Greater Ipswich Chamber
18 Ryder Cup status for chamber member
19 Give your company the ‘Social Edge’
20 Two national awards for member

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Suffolk Chamber in Lowestoft & Waveney Business Awards

Local businesses gathered in November 2016 to celebrate outstanding individual and group business achievements at the annual Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney Business Awards.

The stunning sold-out ceremony, which took place at Ivy House Country Hotel in Lowestoft, celebrated 14 awards – from Apprentice of the Year to Business of the Year.

Over 200 local businesses and special guests enjoyed a bucks fizz reception and three course meal with welcome entertainment from soul vocalist Douglas Brown of Quirk Bespoke Events before the awards ceremony commenced, expertly compered by Chris Bailey.

James Reeder, local businessman for over 30 years and immediate past chair of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney was given the Lifetime Achievement award, sponsored by Archant, for his contribution and commitment to the local community.

Alisa Haynes of Mary Moppins scooped Excellence in Customer Service 11+ employees and the prestigious Business Person of the Year, and the event culminated with Scenic Projects Ltd being recognised as Business of the Year.

Jules Shorrock, chair of the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney commented: “Our awards allow us to come together to celebrate and recognise the entrepreneurship and excellence within our county and in particular here in Lowestoft & Waveney. They also enable businesses in our region to show their support for each other by sponsoring awards.

“it is truly magnificent to see so many businesses showcasing their skills, talent and success. We thank all businesses that have taken part and congratulations to everyone and we look forward to a prosperous 2017.”

John Dugmore, chief executive of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce said: “Every year there are more entries and more difficult decisions for the judges to make – which is a good thing in my book. Suffolk Chamber in Lowestoft & Waveney is a vital and go-ahead part of our chamber family.”

Pictures of some of the winners can be found on page nine of this issue of Chamber Voice.

Later this year it is the 10th anniversary of the Waveney Norse, one of the most prominent glamping providers in the region to show their support for each other by sponsoring awards.

If you would like to be involved then please contact Michelle Gardner, events manager at michelle@waveneychamber.co.uk

Chamber News

The winners and highly commended finalists:

Apprentice of the Year Award
Sponsored by: Peter Aldous MP for Lowestoft & Waveney
Winner: Jed Levet, Access Community Trust
Highly Commended: Sam Hubbard, Hoseasons Holidays

Business of the Year Award
Sponsored by: Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney
Winner: Scenic Projects Ltd

Business Person of the Year Award
Sponsored by: Lowestoft Rising
Winner: Alica Haynes, Mary Moppins Ltd
Highly Commended: Martin Murkett, Tick Solutions Ltd

Commitment to Skills & People Development Award
Sponsored by: Lowestoft College
Winner: Ivy House Country Hotel
Highly Commended: CODE Hair Consultants

Community Pride Award
Sponsored by: Waveney Norse
Winners: Sir John Leman High School
Highly Commended: Julian Claxton Photography

Enterprise in Education Award
Sponsored by: Sizewell C
Winner: Bungay High School
Highly Commended: Ormiston Denes Academy

Excellence in Customer Service Award (1-10)
Sponsored by: Lowestoft Vision
Winner: Rosie’s Beauticians & Rosie’s Spa Day
Highly Commended: CODE Hair Consultants
Runner Up: Country Chiropractics

Excellence in Customer Service Award (11+)
Sponsored by: Essex & Suffolk Water
Winner: Mary Moppins Ltd
Highly Commended: Palmers Department Store

Family Business of the Year Award
Sponsored by: Pleasurewood Hills Family Theme Park
Winner: Palmers Department Store
Highly Commended: Coes Menswear Lowestoft

Growing Business Award
Sponsored by: Associated British Ports
Winner: Scenic Projects Ltd
Highly Commended: P J Gillman Jewellers

Local Tourism Award - incorporating Culture / Hospitality / Leisure Award
Sponsored by: Waveney District Council
Winner: Lowestoft Water Taxi
Highly Commended: Shish Mezze Bar & Restaurant

Most Promising New Business Award
Sponsored by: Lovewell Blake
Winner: Miss Bonny & Calico Jacks
Highly Commended: Bed Down Glamping

Recognition of Lifetime Achievement Award
Sponsored by: Archant
Recognised: James Reeder

Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award
Sponsored by: Ivy House Country Hotel
Winner: Millie Rose Stammers - Millie Rose Hair & Beauty, Industry Hair and Beauty Academy
Highly Commended: Rosie Kefford - Rosie’s Beauticians and Rosie’s Spa Day

All our winners!
Chamber News

A14 campaign – evidence being gathered for RIS2 bid

Partners in the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce-led No More A14 Delays in Suffolk campaign are building up evidence to prove the need for improvements along the route’s twelve ‘pinch points’. Attendees at the latest campaign Strategy Board, now chaired by Jo Churchill MP, heard how Suffolk County Council’s Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Framework (SPIF) is being developed to help the county get the infrastructure it needs in the future.

This framework will provide the long term context for the local economy’s growth and so will provide important evidence in supporting the campaign. The meeting also heard from a senior civil servant from the Department for Transport (DfT) who outlined the process for bids such as that to improve the A14 to be submitted for the second round of the Government’s Road Investment Strategy (RIS2).

Nick Burfield, policy director at Suffolk Chamber, said: “Both the SPIF and the input from the DfT will be very helpful in ensuring the campaign provides the right evidence at the right time to maximise our chances of the A14 being included in RIS2.” Suffolk Chamber is continuing to encourage local businesses and residents to share their own experiences of A14 delays by uploading them to the campaign’s Twitter (@NoMoreA14Delays) and Facebook (@NoMoreA14Delays) accounts.

Suffolk Chamber member named as post-16 review chairman

The immediate past president of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, Dr. Peter Funnell, has been appointed as the independent chair of the New Anglia Post-16 Area Review Steering Group. The review will assess local economic and education needs and the implications for post-16 education and training provision in Norfolk and Suffolk to make sure that college education meets the needs of learners and employers.

The work, which is part of a national review process, will be led by a steering group made up of New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils and representatives from post-16 education and training providers. The review began its work at the end of last year. Dr Peter Funnell said: “The Area Review process is demanding but it also offers real potential to deliver positive benefits to learners and address existing and future skills shortages. “I look forward to working with national and local colleagues on this important initiative.” John Dugmore, chief executive of Suffolk Chamber welcomed the appointment, saying: “Peter brings both his experience and a sharp analysis to this vitally important initiative. By getting our approach to post-16 education and training right, local businesses will be better placed to recruit workers with the right skills and aptitudes to ensure their longer-term success.”

TechEast launches London Embassy and membership

TechEast, the organisation formed to accelerate the expansion of the East of England’s technology cluster and a subsidiary of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, has opened an ‘embassy’ in London and started a drive for members. TechEast brings together leading technology-sector businesses from the East of England, to speak with one voice that is heard across the UK and around the world.

The organisation aims to help create 5,000 jobs, generate an extra £650 million gross value added of economic growth in the east and be one of the UK’s top five tech clusters by 2020. The TechEast Embassy is based at Crown Place, four minutes’ walk from Liverpool Street station.

Companies that become TechEast members will be able to book a meeting room or drop in to use hot desks as part of their London business development plans.

Neil Miles, chief executive of Inasight and chairman of TechEast said: “The provision of a London facility was the top requirement when we polled potential members and we made it one of our six manifesto pledges at the TechEast launch in April last year.” John Dugmore, chief executive of Suffolk Chamber added: “These are exciting times for Suffolk’s high tech businesses and the role of TechEast is to keep the momentum going so that the sector reaches its full potential.” The membership scheme includes opportunities for member companies to increase their brand visibility, networking and business development activities. For more information on the Embassy, membership and the manifesto, go to www.techeast.com.
Suffolk businesses get chance to quiz Brexit minister

“This was a very open and productive meeting, allowing some of Suffolk’s leading employers in the food, drink and agriculture sectors to openly talk about the opportunities and challenges surrounding the country’s withdrawal from the European Union. “This type of high level dialogue is really welcome as it allows us to better represent Suffolk PLC as the UK economically repositions itself – with a strategic emphasis on boosting our exporting efforts.” Stephen Britt, board member of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, was speaking at the end of a meeting, hosted by Suffolk Chamber. It was attended by Lord Bridges of Headley MBE, the parliamentary under secretary of state at the Department for Exiting the European Union, who met with Suffolk Chamber and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership representatives as well as about a dozen food company bosses.

Lord Bridges heard from local businesses on what they need to manage the transition and seize the opportunities to boost international trade. He said: “There is a strong spirit of enterprise in the East of England where 86,000 small businesses have set up since 2010. We’re working to make sure that spirit is fostered and build a new relationship with the EU that works for businesses in Suffolk.” John Dugmore, Suffolk Chamber chief executive added: “We welcome the fact that Lord Bridges took time out of his busy schedule to meet with us and our members. We hope to build on this meeting by helping to shape the Government’s approach to these vital market sectors within the Suffolk economy.”

Suffolk Chamber helps British exporters break into Russian market

Suffolk Chamber International hosted an opportunity for companies interested in breaking into the open Russian market.

Jim Fanshawe, Suffolk Chamber International’s manager said: “One of Suffolk Chamber’s four key business themes is promoting international trade. This Doing Business in Russia event is yet another example as to how we can bring together specific country experts with businesses in the county who are looking to enter into new markets so that they are primed and ready to succeed. For this event, Suffolk Chamber International used its influence to bring together in one place key specialists from a number of different disciplines to offer an comprehensive overview of what it takes to make it in Russia.”

He added: “We were particularly delighted to be joined at the event by David Cant from Albion Overseas Ltd. David has worked with Russia since the 1980s and is fluent in the language. David is also an accredited Adventace sales trainer and highly experienced Russia Cultural Trainer.”

David was joined by other specialists from Blackthorne International Transport, Albion Overseas, RBCC and CTMS Travel. Delegates took full advantage of the opportunity to have meetings with these experts to discuss how they could reach their export potential in the Russian market. For more information about Suffolk Chamber International please contact Rachel Cornes rachel@suffolkchamber.co.uk
The New Anglia Growth Hub recently helped Lowestoft-based theatre set makers Scenic Projects to secure vital investment and move to a new, larger site with funding from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership's Growing Business Fund.

Nick Garrod, the company’s managing director explained: “Our business plan has always been to operate from one site to help improve quality and efficiency. But we needed additional commercial space to enable us to add other services such as scenic costumes, props and storage within the entertainment industry.”

The New Anglia Growth Hub helped the business to secure an £80,000 grant from the Growing Business Fund to help the company expand. The grant, together with the company’s own funds, was used to move the business to the new site, which will create additional jobs. The stage is set.

Suffolk Chamber backs BME Business Awards

Organised by the Bangladeshi Support Centre and the University of Suffolk, the 2016 Suffolk Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Business Awards was the first such event to take place in the county. Over 100 people attended the ceremony and were treated to an evening of great food, entertainment and empowering business stories.

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce sponsored the Businessperson of the Year award which was won by Mac Khan of Staines & Co.

According to John Dugmore, chief executive of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce: “Because of our long experience in backing Suffolk businesses and our members in particular, Suffolk Chamber knows that a diverse economic base is inherently a good thing. Diversity certainly means that the economic risk is spread. Crucially, it also means the positive and active sharing of new ways of viewing market opportunities and new ways of working, fusing together new approaches and creating new products and services.”

Suffolk Business Women: “time for us to get agile!”

“With these targets, we aim to encourage the transformation of businesses across our county to more effectively use the immense skills and talents of all our workforce,” Ginny Idehen, chair of Suffolk Business Women, which is part of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, was speaking at the recent launch of the organisation’s objectives.

Using data that shows the county lags behind the rest of the country with female executives occupying only 14% of board positions (Eastern Daily Press Research 2016) and an average pay gap of £8,000 per year in full time salaries paid to men compared to women (New Anglia LEP Economic Equality report 2013), the organisation believes the solution is to be found in changing how firms in all sectors treat their staff.

Suffolk Business Women’s objectives
- Increase female participation on all Suffolk boards from 14% (2016) to 25% (2020)
- Increase female participation on Suffolk Chamber boards to 20% (2017)
- Increase the number of women in the Suffolk 100 list of business influencers to a minimum of 20 (by 2018)
- Highlight how Suffolk businesses can become more agile and promote agility and good employers
- Identify mentoring and training opportunities for leadership among Suffolk Business Women members

Ginny continued: “Agility is more than ‘just’ providing roles that fit around women with children. “It is about re-working how a business operates so that all employees have the chance to contribute fully, and that a business grows economically because they have a committed and motivated workforce.” To encourage and promote agility in business, Suffolk Business Women – which has a membership of over 1,400 – will be launching a promotional campaign including a mentoring and training action plan later this year.

For more information about Suffolk Business Women, go to: https://www.suffolkchamber.co.uk/events-networking/suffolk-business-women/ or email sbw@suffolkchamber.co.uk

If you’re growing your business, ask us about grants to help with the costs of expansion. For more information, please call 0300 333 6536 or email growthhub@newanglia.co.uk

Take the scenic route

The New Anglia Growth Hub recently helped Lowestoft-based theatre set makers Scenic Projects to secure vital investment and move to a new, larger site with funding from the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership’s Growing Business Fund.

Nick Garrod, the company’s managing director explained: “Our business plan has always been to operate from one site to help improve quality and efficiency. But we needed additional commercial space to enable us to add other services such as scenic costumes, props and storage within the entertainment industry.”

The New Anglia Growth Hub helped the business to secure an £80,000 grant from the Growing Business Fund to help the company expand. The grant, together with the company’s own funds, was used to move the business to the new site, which will create additional jobs. The stage is set.
It is a positive sign of the times that in recent months a number of women have taken on prominent roles in the Suffolk business community.

Late last year Catherine Johnson, a partner at law firm Birketts, became chair of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Greater Ipswich and Jules Shorrock, managing director of Citrus Security Shredding, took up the chair at Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney – the first woman to hold the position since the organisation was formed over 100 years ago.

At the same time, Suffolk Business Women, also part of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, has Ginny Idehen, the manager at Suffolk Mind’s Quay Place centre in Ipswich, as its chair.

More work required

While there is a lot of good news around equal opportunities in the region, all three agree more work is required.

This is borne out by the findings from the latest Suffolk Ltd report - an analysis of the county’s 100 largest independent companies published annually by business advisors Grant Thornton and Birketts.

Key findings from the 2016 report are that 20% (81) of the 415 directors in Suffolk Ltd are women and that over half of the top 100 companies (53) have no women directors at all.

Despite the low numbers of women in senior positions across the leading businesses in Suffolk, Catherine says there are reasons for optimism.

Voluntary targets

“The figures are an improvement on last year and we are seeing more businesses across Suffolk putting in place voluntary targets and strategies aimed at encouraging the recruitment and promotion of women,” she said.

Catherine believes voluntary targets are an important tool in this area and points to the strides being made nationally where voluntary targets have been credited with doubling the number of women in senior positions within FTSE 100 companies.

Ginny agrees the situation is improving and recounts her experience of going to a Suffolk business networking event around 20 years ago where she was the only woman in the room.

“Today, the proportion of women is likely to be around 50% - that’s a good sign,” she said.

Ginny thinks one factor that holds women back in the workplace is their reluctance to put themselves forward when opportunities arise. She says part of the role of Suffolk Business Women is to inspire women by highlighting female role models and the good work they do.

And, says Jules, the opening up of career opportunities for women isn’t just something that should concern women. It’s in the interest of the whole Suffolk business community.

She said: “We are seeing a high number of really talented women going through the University of Suffolk - but what are they thinking? Where are they going to go? The chances are they will be attracted to more cosmopolitan areas of the country if they don’t get the same opportunities in Suffolk.”

Agile businesses

All three agree that a key step to enabling women to compete on a level playing field is for more businesses to offer flexible working arrangements, so they can work around their family commitments, whether it be caring for elderly parents or bringing up children.

“The elephant in the room is that women who choose to, have to take time off work to have children,” said Catherine. “So, we do need some flexibility.”

And it’s not just women who benefit from flexible working, says Ginny. “Increasingly, men want to spend more time with their children or to have flexibility to care for parents,” she said.

“It’s about making work more inclusive for everyone. If Suffolk businesses were to be more agile in the way they work – it would enable them to get the best out of everyone.”

For more information about Suffolk Business Women, go to: https://www.suffolkchamber.co.uk/events-networking/suffolk-business-women or email sbw@suffolkchamber.co.uk

A longer version of this article first appeared in Business East Monthly in December 2016.
Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney Business Awards 2016
Ivy House Country Hotel, Lowestoft

This is a selection of pictures from this prestigious event. For a full list of winners, please go to page 3 of this issue of Chamber Voice or to: www.suffolkchamber.co.uk/lowestoft-and-waveney/awards/awards-winners/2016/
Meeting up with Peter Aldous is always a pleasure. He is the very epitome of Suffolk values: thoughtful, industrious and slightly understated.

This should come as no surprise as the MP for Waveney was born in Ipswich and has lived in the county all his life. A partner in the family-owned arable and pig farm in north Suffolk, he worked for 27 years as a chartered surveyor before being elected in 2010.

Peter believes it is these values that will stand the local business community in good stead regardless of major events, including the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union.

“In their understated and dogged way I anticipate that the Suffolk business community will ‘just get on with it’, whilst at the same time letting us politicians know what they need for their businesses to thrive,” he suggests.

“Suffolk people and the way of life make the county a very good place to do business, which can be improved further by the right investment in skills and infrastructure.

“One of my first memories on joining the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce back in the late 1980s was their organisation of a trade delegation to the Far East. It is this outward looking and proven track record which will be crucial in forging new alliances around the world.”

He remains a big supporter of the organisation. “It certainly punches above its weight. If Suffolk Chamber of Commerce did not exist, it would have to be invented. There are a number of other business groups that do great work in representing their members, but what the Suffolk Chamber does is provide a strategic overview and a comprehensive network of local chambers in touch with their local businesses.”

Peter Aldous believes that the Government as a whole is becoming better at calibrating the right type of relationship between local chambers and their wider business communities.

“In the past such decisions at times have been made on a ‘Westminster knows best’ basis. The New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, in which the Suffolk Chamber plays an important role, puts in place a new relationship which we now need to develop. There is a need for greater capacity to secure further much needed investment, public accountability and a system where success and a proven track record is recognised and rewarded.”

Quite simply for him, the most productive way of working between Government and business is one where public economic investment into an area meets the specific and evidenced needs of local businesses and has been rigorously scrutinised.

“I believe in team work, working with colleagues in Parliament, local businesses, local government and charities and the voluntary sector to secure investment for Waveney and Suffolk.”

Can he give any recent examples where this collaborative approach has proven its worth?

“The Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth Enterprise Zone has been a major success and has acted as a catalyst in attracting millions of pounds of private investment into the area.

Helping to secure Government funding for Lowestoft’s much needed third crossing was an important milestone. I now chair the steering group, on which Suffolk Chamber is represented, that works with the scheme’s project managers Suffolk County Council to ensure that the bridge is built on time and on budget and in a manner that secures the maximum benefit for the town’s economy.”

Which brings us onto Suffolk Chamber’s many lobbying campaigns, aimed at ensuring that the county has the right infrastructure and skills to ‘lock-in’ its future prosperity and continue contributing to the whole country’s success.

How would Peter summarise the current situation? “Good work has been done on both issues, including the significant recent improvements in school performance and the enormous investment in the region’s rail
network which was announced on the award of the new franchise to Greater Anglia.

“However much more is needed on both fronts. It is important that business is fully involved in both schools and skills and this is an issue that Lowestoft Rising is addressing locally.

“With roads, railways and broadband it is necessary to think strategically and to identify and address ‘bottlenecks’. My role is twofold; as a partner in working up local solutions and as an advocate in Westminster to promote Waveney and Suffolk and to secure government funding where it is needed.”

Once again he singles out Suffolk Chamber as being a key catalyst in getting such strategic issues fully onto the agenda. “Regionally you played a lead role in ensuring that the new section of the A14 between Huntingdon and Cambridge was not tolled and closer to home your local knowledge and determination ensured that we were able to secure much needed improvements to the level crossing at Oulton Broad North Railway Station; a bottleneck on the road network where considerable congestion builds up when the barriers are down.”

But surely the demise of the Norfolk and Suffolk devolution arrangements has dealt a blow to more local control over decision-making and to our reputation at Government level?

Peter is having none of that.

“Local business did a great job in promoting the proposal and for keeping it on the rails for as long as they did. We now have the opportunity to bring forward a bespoke devolution deal for Suffolk, which sets out a clear vision of the difference that the deal can make for the county, speeds up decision-making on major infrastructure projects and addresses the public scepticism of the concept of an elected mayor if this remains a pre-requisite for securing a deal.”

So Peter Aldous is confident that with the right relationships in place, Suffolk is on the cusp of further economic prosperity and wider social wellbeing. Comparing the county to a Newmarket thoroughbred racehorse, he sums up this time of opportunity as “the role of national and local government and political leaders, supported by business, is to be a better racehorse trainer so that we are better placed to win the big prizes in the top races!”
EDF Energy signs up to Suffolk Chamber of Commerce’s Young Chamber Plus scheme

EDF Energy, one of Suffolk’s leading employers, has become the latest organisation to sign up as a patron of an innovative scheme run by the leading business body in the county, aimed at bridging the gap between the world of education and the world of work.

During the first-ever Suffolk Festival of Learning, held at the University of Suffolk, EDF Energy became the energy sector patron of the Young Chamber scheme, run by Suffolk Chamber of Commerce.

EDF Energy, which operates Sizewell B power station and is looking to build and run Sizewell C, has a very strong track record in helping the county’s students prepare for the world of work.

Jim Crawford, EDF Energy’s project development director for Sizewell C, said: “The Young Chamber programme gives us an opportunity to engage with more secondary schools that already recognise the value of bridging the gap between businesses and the education sector in Suffolk. This is a year-long commitment which will form part of a range of activities and initiatives we will be involved in to help develop Suffolk’s talent over the years to come.”

According to Suffolk Chamber’s Ashleigh Seymour-Rutherford: “We have a longstanding and mutually supportive relationship with EDF Energy. They are one of Suffolk Chamber’s patrons and we are working with them on our Sizewell C supply chain website aimed at ensuring that as many local firms as possible secure contracts to help in the construction of the new station.”

Young Chamber patrons are able to participate in a number of additional products from the Chamber’s suite of services including sector specific events, business/education business leaders’ dinners and delivering specific employability events into Suffolk schools.

Sizing up Sizewell C proposals

Readers of this edition of Chamber Voice may still have time to respond to EDF Energy’s Stage 2 Consultation – but only if they’re quick!

Launched on November 23 last year, the eight-week consultation into the company’s plans to build another power station at Sizewell on the Suffolk coast closes on February 3.

During this period the company has hosted nearly two dozen public exhibitions in the parishes around the proposed site.

John Dugmore, chief executive of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce, said: “We believe that there are considerable opportunities for the local business community both during the proposed Sizewell C station’s construction and once it is operational.

“But it is important that the business community now does two things. Firstly, work with us and owners EDF Energy to better shape key aspects of the proposal so that local businesses, including those in the services sector, can maximise the opportunities available and build this into their business plans.

“Secondly, please sign up to our Sizewell C Supply Chain website (www.sizewellcsupplychain.co.uk) to register your company’s interest in providing goods and services to the project. Remember; 80% of the work in building and running a nuclear power station comes from ‘non-nuclear’ businesses.”

For more information on the Stage 2 Consultation go to www.sizewellc.co.uk
New Greater Anglia franchise brings £1.4 billion investment in complete fleet replacement

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce patron Greater Anglia, the train operator which runs services across the region, including along the Great Eastern Main Line (GEML) to and from London, has now begun its new nine year franchise, which will lead to a transformation for rail travel in East Anglia.

The centrepiece of the plans is the total renewal of the train fleet, with 1,043 new carriages replacing 937 existing carriages during 2019/2020, to not just transform the journey experience, but also markedly increase seating capacity (including over 50% more seats into London in the morning peak); improve service frequency on a number of lines; reduce journey times and raise performance standards.

There are 665 carriages being built by Bombardier in Derby and 378 by Stadler in Switzerland. All routes across Suffolk will see an increase in capacity, whilst the Ipswich to Peterborough line will also see a more frequent, hourly, service. On average, journey times across the region will reduce by 10% and the new trains will be significantly more reliable than the ones they replace.

There is also major investment in stations and maintenance depots; in ticket vending machines (for every station); in customer information (again, new systems for every station); in smart ticketing; in car parking, cycle parking and integrated transport arrangements; in simpler customer compensation; in Community Rail Partnerships and Customer Experience and Community Funds.

There will be a Stakeholder Advisory Board and a continuation of the operator’s proactive approach to developing East Anglia’s railways to meet the justifiably ever-rising expectations of customers, communities and stakeholders. Plus, consistent with the pivotal role of employees, there is major investment in training and development, as well as an innovation academy and fund that will help to tap in to employees’ ideas about how to keep making things better for customers.

In the short term, the major upgrade for Ipswich station is nearly complete, some additional trains (to add extra peak time capacity) are due in service next summer, the launch of automatic delay repay compensation is planned by spring 2017, and both the full refurbishment of 30 Class 321 units and the extension of on-board wi-fi are underway.

The intercity carriages in use on the GEML have just benefitted from a major refresh including the installation of power sockets, new lighting and new toilets, in a project completed ahead of schedule in September 2016. Meanwhile, the operator is investing an additional £5 million in initiatives to improve the reliability of its current trains, with work also underway with Network Rail to secure improvements in infrastructure reliability. It all adds up to a period of substantial investment and improvement to deliver real positive change in rail services for customers and communities in the East of England.

For more information go to www.greateranglia.co.uk
New members

- **ABSSoftware Ltd**
  07985 571670
  patrick@abssoftware.co.uk
  www.abssoftware.co.uk
  Mr Patrick Kenlock
  Managing director
  ABSSoftware specialises in creating workflow aligned business solutions on the FileMaker platform that increase efficiency by integrating your existing systems, and best practice to produce a streamlined data driven mobile and Desktop application.

- **A-Plan Insurance**
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  burystedmunds@aplan.co.uk
  www.aplan.co.uk/
  burystedmunds
  Mr Daniel Skipbins
  Branch manager
  Insurance broker.

- **AQR Coaching**
  07786 336313
  pete@aqrcouaching.co.uk
  www.aqrcouaching.co.uk
  Mr Pete Wortley
  Senior partner
  Business transformation and organisational cultural change.
  Executive coaching and mental toughness development.

- **Avanti Gas Ltd**
  0808 208 0000
  enquiries@avantigas.com
  www.avantigas.com
  Mr Mark Gallant
  Area sales manager
  AvantiGas deliver clean and efficient LPG to homes across Scotland, England and Wales.

- **Bungay High School**
  01986 892140
  finance@bungayhigh.co.uk
  www.bungayhigh.co.uk
  Mr Clinton Gillett
  Assistant head teacher
  Opportunity, aspiration and excellence for all.

- **Care.Expert**
  01473 254479
  info@care.expert
  www.care.expert
  Mrs Cilla Steed
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  Online agency linking/ providing employers and employees for various domestic duties including childcare and elderly care.

- **CGM Global Supplies Ltd**
  01394 421235
  charles@cgmglobal.co.uk
  www.cgmglobal.co.uk
  Mr Charles Margans
  Managing director
  CGM global supplies was formed to give our customers the chance to purchase factory original equipment and spares at very competitive prices.

- **Claremont Pier Ltd**
  01502 573553
  claremontpier@btinternet.com
  www.claremontpier.co.uk
  Miss Hannah Marks
  Events co-ordinator
  Leisure pier, arcade, roller rink, Rocksalt & Nemos’ restaurants, aquarium, live music and more.

- **Cloud Computer Services Ltd**
  01502 588400
  steve@cloud-cs.com
  www.cloud-cs.com
  Mr Steve Tubby
  General manager
  Cloud Computer Services provides a fully comprehensive range of IT support services to a diverse range of businesses and organisations, ranging from sole traders through to large global companies, across Norfolk and Suffolk.

- **Cross Country Carriers Ltd**
  01284 810739
  info@xcountryltd.co.uk
  www.xcountryltd.co.uk
  Mr Tim Goodman
  Sales manager
  Cross Country Carriers provide single and multi-pallet distribution throughout the UK as well as quarter and half pallet deliveries. We can deliver throughout the UK on either a next day or two to three day delivery. Immediate responses are also available for urgent cases.

- **Dallmer Ltd**
  01787 248244
  wayne.hailstone@dallmer.com
  www.dallmer.com/en
  Mr Wayne Hailstone
  UK General manager
  Dallmer manufactures high specification shower and roof drains. Working closely with OEM’s wholesalers and architects.

- **Focus Telemarketing**
  07760 448334
  jax.webb@btinternet.com
  Mrs Jacqueline Webb
  A personal effective way to incorporate telemarketing, lead generation and data cleansing into your SME business.

- **Full Mix Marketing**
  01603 446227
  info@fullmixmarketing.co.uk
  www.fullmixmarketing.co.uk
  Mrs Sarah West
  Managing director
  Full service marketing agency delivering strategic, digital and offline marketing to Norfolk and Suffolk businesses.

- **Greenman Embroidery & Print**
  01473 680849
  adam@greenmanep.com
  www.greenmanep.com
  Mr Adam Scott
  Owner
  Embroidery and print - specialising in workwear, schoolwear, sportswear and martial arts apparel.

- **Flow Energy**
  020 3137 4466
  samantha.mee@flowgroup.uk.com
  www.flowgroup.uk.com
  Mr Nigel Canham
  Group CFO
  Flowgroup plc provides a range of innovative energy technologies, energy supply and energy services.

- **Felixstowe Trade and Enterprise College**
  01394 458500
  info@felixstowe-ac.co.uk
  www.felixstowe-ac.co.uk
  Mrs Belinda Jarvis
  Commercial director
  Specialists in shipping and logistics adding value through training, consultancy and professional qualifications.

- **Flagship Group**
  0845 258 6153
  info@flagship-group.co.uk
  www.flagship-group.co.uk
  Mr Sam Greenacre
  Head of Communications
  Housing association with 22,000 homes across the east of England.

- **Flow Energy**
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  Mr Nigel Canham
  Group CFO
  Flowgroup plc provides a range of innovative energy technologies, energy supply and energy services.

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  Mr Adam Scott
  Owner
  Embroidery and print - specialising in workwear, schoolwear, sportswear and martial arts apparel.
For further information about Chamber membership contact 01473 680600 or membership@suffolkchamber.co.uk

June Davenport, Polly Goddard, David Verney at the Suffolk Chamber of Commerce September Networking Lunch, held at Finborough Hall, Stowmarket. Picture: David Garrad
James Reeder stands down as Lowestoft & Waveney chair

“I’ve been a local businessman for over 30 years. Looking back over the last four of them, I can say - hand on heart - that I am more optimistic now than at any previous time about the prospects for Lowestoft & Waveney.”

James Reeder was speaking during the week he stood down as chair of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Lowestoft & Waveney – a position he has held since 2012.

A former Merchant Navy officer, partner in a family-run nursing home, and chief executive of a retail group of companies, James has been an important and influential figure in re-engineering the economic base and growing optimism within the town and its surrounding villages.

His proudest achievement is: “Lowestoft Vision. I was part of the group that around seven years ago said we should set up a business improvement district to revitalise the town centre.”

Jules Shorrock, the managing director of Citrus Security Shredding, has taken over from James.

Jules said: “We all owe a big debt of gratitude to James Reeder for his leadership as chair of Suffolk Chamber in Lowestoft & Waveney over the last four years. He’s been an absolute giant and is always working to benefit our community.”

Her priorities for her time in office fall into two categories. Firstly, she aims to further deliver on the chamber’s manifesto commitments to drive forward economic development, make Lowestoft more accessible to business, grow the town’s night time economy, and enhance the local transport networks and infrastructure.

Secondly, Jules wants to deepen Suffolk Chamber in Lowestoft & Waveney’s relationship with both its existing members and the wider business community.

Mastering the ‘Vision’ for Bury St Edmunds businesses

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Bury St Edmunds continues to work with St Edmundsbury Borough Council to ensure that its Vision 2031 delivers the necessary sustainable economic and housing growth and transport improvements to ‘lock-in’ the area’s prosperity for the future.

The Masterplan for Vision 2031 is currently in a draft form. Options are being looked at to address the key issues that will drive future economic growth before a draft Masterplan is produced for comment throughout the spring and summer of this year.

The final Masterplan will then be launched in the winter.

Matt Moss, chair of Suffolk Chamber in Bury St Edmunds, said: “I’m pleased that St Edmundsbury has so openly engaged with us and the wider business community to nail down the specific issues that must be addressed to ensure we can capitalise on our further economic opportunities.”

Key issues identified in the draft Masterplan include improved links between the older part of the town centre and the Arc, better transportation between the centre and outer parts of the town, more investment in St Andrews Street and Tayfen Road, and an overall upgrade in both parking facilities and road signage.

“This Masterplan is another key piece in the jigsaw that seeks to lock in future growth and prosperity for the town. Suffolk Chamber in Bury St Edmunds is delighted with the progress being made and is especially pleased at the level of partnership working going on to achieve this outcome,” added Matt.
Dave Muller hands over at Suffolk Chamber in Greater Ipswich

After five years at the helm, Dave Muller has stepped down as chair of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Greater Ipswich. However, his commitment to the town and the area around it remains undiminished.

Dave recalls: “We wanted to establish a strong business voice for Ipswich and its hinterland, stretching from Hadleigh in the west, Woodbridge in the north and Felixstowe in the east.”

He believes that in five short years, Suffolk Chamber in Greater Ipswich and its partners have made some major strides in achieving these objectives – although there is still much room for further improvements.

As a previous principal of Suffolk New College and a visiting professor at the University of Suffolk, he has a particular passion about the links between learning and wealth creation.

“The relationship between business and the area’s education sector is one of its great strengths. “There is a mutual understanding between the two and a shared purpose that is not seen elsewhere.” Catherine Johnson is the new chair of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Greater Ipswich. Catherine is a partner at Ipswich-based law firm Birketts LLP and specialises in employment law. Born in Ipswich, the town is of particular importance to her. Following a period of study of Suffolk, he has a particular passion about the College and a visiting professor at the University of Suffolk.

“With Elaine and Lesley we have two highly experienced local businesspeople who understand the importance of the surrounding villages has boosted its community in Haverhill and the villages around will add an extra and very welcome energy and purpose to what we do here and what we offer the business community.”

New board members of Suffolk Chamber in Newmarket & District

The leading voice for the business community in Haverhill and the surrounding villages has boosted its board by recruiting two of the area’s leading businesspeople.

Elaine Carr is the owner of Haverhill-based FlipFlop Marketing and has 30 years’ worth of professional marketing experience to offer the chamber. Founded in 2002, FlipFlop Marketing specialises in helping SMEs to adopt a structured approach to their marketing. Elaine combines a strong analytical skill set with a process driven and highly disciplined approach and has a track record of creating feasible, viable marketing campaigns that deliver results.

Lesley Whiting is a director at 1st Stop Recruitment. She first went into recruitment in 1987, and started her own company 13 years later.

1st Stop Recruitment has a vision to be the best it can be, supporting clients and candidates, and being honest every step of the way. The company offers a bespoke solution according to client requirements. More importantly, they listen, advise and agree solutions.

Paul Donno, chair of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Haverhill & District welcomed Elaine and Lesley’s appointment.

“With Elaine and Lesley we have been fortunate enough to have a wider business and strategic background to add to our board. Our board is strong and both are known for their professionalism, hard work, business links and commercial awareness. We are delighted to have them with us and we'll benefit from their experience.”
Kevin Froggatt of Andrew Dickson

The year of the playground?

Kevin Froggatt, a director and independent financial adviser of Suffolk Chamber member Andrew Dickson Ltd offers his views on the last 12 months

Last year was a ‘see-saw’ year for investment markets and really kept our business on its toes. The first quarter was full of doom and gloom, mostly brought on by the fear regarding a potential June Brexit. That couldn’t happen? Well Brexit happened, followed by a very short period of market volatility, only to settle down and achieve record highs again for the main indices (FTSE100/S&P500). Then we all felt like we were on the ‘merry go round’, the same fears over a Trump victory, but that could never happen could it? Here we go again, but hold on, no ‘slides’, no big ‘swings’. The markets carried on regardless, or so it seemed.

What about 2017? We continue to provide our clients with regular reviews and professional advice, being cautiously optimistic, without playing in the ‘sandpit’ with our backs to the markets. For further information, please call 01379 890401 or go to www.andrewdickson.co.uk

Chamber member achieves Ryder Cup status

Suffolk Chamber member Ransomes Jacobsen, the Ipswich-based manufacturer of golf course maintenance equipment, has signed an agreement to become an Official Supplier to the 2018 Ryder Cup, which will take place at the celebrated Le Golf National near Versailles, Paris. As the existing exclusive supplier of turf care equipment to Le Golf National, the Ryder Cup will provide the Suffolk-based company with a unique opportunity to showcase its portfolio of premium turf care equipment. This commercial win comes after the company supplied more than 40 items of course maintenance equipment to the 2016 Rio Olympics golf course.

Englishman Justin Rose won the first Olympic gold medal in golf in 112 years.

Alan Prickett, managing director, international at Ransomes Jacobsen, said: “The Ryder Cup is one of the sporting world’s most revered and highly anticipated events. It will be a privilege to play a role in preparing the course for the match and helping to ensure that the highest standards of course preparation are applied for such a prestigious tournament.” For further information, please go to http://www.jacobsen.com/europe

Prevention – a healthy attitude for a healthy future for your staff

It’s all too easy to take everyday wellbeing for granted, but you never know what’s around the corner as far as health is concerned.

Without regular visits to the dentist and optician your employees are not only risking permanent damage to their teeth and eyes, they might also be missing the opportunity for a health professional to check for more serious underlying health issues that could have greater impact than just the odd filling or a new pair of glasses. Westfield Health’s Chamber Primary Health Plan is designed especially for members of Suffolk Chamber to improve staff health and wellbeing and encourage employees to be more proactive about their own healthcare, helping them to budget for essential, everyday health costs. It is also tailored to help businesses reward and retain staff, manage risk and sickness absence, and increase morale and productivity. Additional benefits include access to counselling services, scanning facilities and DoctorLine - a GP telephone and webcam consultation service, as well as expert second medical opinion service Best Doctors and Westfield Rewards – an exclusive website offering special offers and discounts from over 450 leading retailers. For more information about the Chamber Plan, visit www.westfieldhealth.com/chamber or call 0345 602 1629.
Protect your business!

Bill Ward, director of Suffolk Chamber member Ward Trade Marks Ltd offers some advice about protecting your trademarks.

“If you don’t register your mark, someone else can, and stop you from using the mark yourself. We saw this recently where a small Suffolk business had been trading for eight years without registering their name as a trade mark. A national franchise registered a similar name, and then sent the company a letter threatening to sue them if they did not stop using their name.

“Legally, the Suffolk company was in the right, but did not have the budget for a big legal battle and even if they won, would not have acquired all their costs back. In the end, they lost their name and all the goodwill they had built up. Yet this could have been avoided by registering their trade mark at the outset.”

For further information call 01223 421779 or go to www.wardtrademarks.com

Cleaning up in the west

NewClean Ltd is a commercial cleaning company based in Newmarket, covering Bury St Edmunds, Cambridge and Haverhill and a member of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce. It will clean everything in your workplace barring the skeletons in your closet! Owner Alan Trim says: “Tracking and training our staff has so far given us the edge in a saturated market. Saturated in the main by firms with little desire to be more than one man in a van, or of such epic proportions they sometimes lose sight of the standards that got them there. We currently sit somewhere in the centre of that spectrum. I’m delighted we have such a dedicated team of people, adding to them is the tricky part but so far we’ve managed it. I’m grateful, daily, for the staff and clients we have acquired along the way.” For more information go to www.newclean.co.uk

Give your company ‘The Social Edge’

With 30 million active UK users, social media has fast become a way customers discover local businesses. Now, new Suffolk Chamber member The Social Edge has launched to help businesses use social media to best effect. “Social media is a huge opportunity for many businesses. However, too many expend effort without it creating real results,” says Sarah West, managing director of The Social Edge. Former winner of Young Marketer of the Year, Sarah established the award-nominated social media team for leading holiday company, Hoseasons. The Social Edge now helps Suffolk businesses turn social media into a new way of boosting sales. “It doesn’t make sense to just pay for activity when it’s results you need. Because we’re confident we can improve results, we even offer our clients a guarantee.” states Sarah. As well as a free online social media health check, The Social Edge has created a number of free guides to help businesses get a head start. For more information please call 01603 469516 or go to www.thesocialedge.co.uk
MyGo has much going for Suffolk youth

MyGo is an innovative youth employment service for 16 to 24-year-olds in Suffolk. The initiative’s goal is simple - to ensure all 16 to 24-year-olds in the Suffolk area have the right tools and support to start or progress their careers, whether it be into employment, education or training.

The MyGo team offers free one-to-one career coaching, personal employment support, training courses, recruitment events, exclusive job opportunities and benefits advice within its modern, open employment centres across Suffolk.

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce is working with MyGo to help them engage with local businesses to promote its services to as many relevant young people as possible. A young person can register via www.its-mygo.co.uk to access an online data capture form. This will then be picked up by MyGo’s outreach team who will contact applicants directly to arrange an appointment. Alternatively, an interested young person can visit the MyGo Centre in Ipswich town centre on Princes Street. Upon registration MyGo conducts an assessment of needs.

Based on this a MyGo coach will tailor a package of support to each individual’s needs with the aim of getting them into sustainable employment. A myriad of training is available both on a one to one basis and in groups that will focus on helping young people gain core employability skills and improving confidence. MyGo has partners that provide other types of services such as wellbeing, advice and guidance and specialist training.

Its central team of employer relationship managers have regular contact with the coaches, which enables them to tap into vacancies and prepare the young people to be the best they can be in readiness for their desired opportunity. So please go-ahead and spread the word about MyGo!

Chamber member wins two national awards

Suffolk Chamber of Commerce member and Haverhill-based accountants 1 Accounts Online Ltd recently scooped two prestigious national accountancy awards. The first accolade came when 1 Accounts was awarded Most Innovative Sole Practitioner 2016 in the 2020 Innovation Awards.

2020 Innovation is a membership organisation for accountants across the globe. It provides innovative solutions for progressive accountants and tax professionals, helping them to improve the services they offer to clients through the use of technology. Less than three weeks later the team was thrilled to receive the British Accountancy Award for Best New Practice 2016.

Paul and his fellow director and wife, Jenni Donno, joined around 600 guests at the black tie event which took place at The Brewery in the heart of the City of London. They were presented with their trophy by impressionist and comedian Jon Culshaw. According to the judging panel 1 Accounts had shown “good growth, a feeling that it is really driven, with a clear strategy. "They demonstrated a variety of tools in their armoury to support their direction of travel.” Paul, who is also chair of Suffolk Chamber of Commerce in Haverhill & District and the Suffolk Chamber Bank of England Panel, said: “We want to thank all our clients, family and friends who have given such wonderful support and motivated us to get where we are today.”

John Dugmore, chief executive of Suffolk Chamber congratulated 1 Accounts on their success. “It’s good to see yet another example of a Suffolk firm being recognised nationally for outstanding achievements. “These award wins send out the message that this county is the best for business!” For more information about 1 Accounts please visit www.1accountsonline.co.uk or call Paul Donno on 01440 844984.

Chamber Member News